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TAGS: [IS KMDR MEDIA REACTION REPORT](#)
SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

- [1](#). Mideast
- [2](#). Democracy in Mideast
- [3](#). Israeli Ambassador to U.S. Danny Ayalon

Key stories in the media:

All media highlighted the blocking of 40 main junctions across the country by disengagement opponents Monday afternoon. Up to 350 protesters were arrested. (Reports vary.) All media quoted police as saying Monday that three Jewish extremists have been questioned for allegedly planning to fire a missile at Jerusalem's Temple Mount in an effort to halt the Gaza Strip disengagement. The three men were part of a group of nine suspects arrested over the last month in two separate cases over alleged plans to attack the Temple Mount. (Reports vary: Ha'aretz reported that five Israeli Jews, who are members of a group identified with the Bratslav Hasidic movement, had been arrested.) All of the suspects have been released from custody, with the State Attorney's Office deciding not to press charges against any of the suspects due to lack of evidence and the fact that they had second thoughts about their plot even before they were detained.

Ha'aretz (banner) and Jerusalem Post cited Gaza settler circles (which are opposed to the official settler leadership in the Katif Bloc, according to Ha'aretz) as saying that several hundred families (450, according to Jerusalem Post) from the Katif Bloc (Gush Katif) have signed up for the plan to move to Nitzanim.

Ha'aretz and Jerusalem Post reported that Israel's Ambassador to the U.S. Danny Ayalon is expected to lose his battle with FM Shalom, despite PM Sharon's support for him. Yediot quoted Ayalon as saying in private conversations that he feels threatened.

Ha'aretz reported that the IDF and defense establishment have decided to offer a financial reward for information about any Israeli soldier missing in action.

Leading media reported that for the first time, outgoing IDF Chief of Staff Moshe Ya'alon was interviewed on the Arabic satellite channel Al Arabiya-TV.

Yediot reported that on Monday, the Tel Aviv District Court recognized Haggai Shefi, an Israeli who was killed in the attack on New York's World Trade Center, as a victim of an act of terrorism legally included in "hostile actions against Israel."

Instead of a regular banner, Maariv placed on its front page an article by its Editor-in-Chief Amnon Dankner and senior columnist Dan Margalit denouncing what they view as phenomena of corruption in Israel. Public figures cited in the article include FM Silvan Shalom's wife Judy Nir-Moses-Shalom and MK Omri Sharon, PM Sharon's son. Leading media reported that Attorney General Menachem Mazuz has ordered an investigation into political appointments at the Agriculture Ministry. The media quoted Agriculture Minister Yisrael Katz (Likud) that he was not involved in the appointments.

Jerusalem Post quoted officials as saying that the

visit to Israel of Polish Minister for National Defense Jerzy Smajdzinski is spawning deals worth millions of dollars.

Under the headline, "Poll: 35 Million Anti-Semites in U.S. Now," Maariv published the results of a recent survey in the U.S. that found an increase in anti-Semitic incidents in the U.S. in 2004. The poll found that close to 35 million Americans -- 14 percent of the population -- hold clearly anti-Semitic views.

1. Mideast:

Summary:

Liberal columnist Yair Lapid wrote on page one of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "The road blocking will put the number [of right-wing protesters] back in the area Ariel Sharon likes to see them.... [On the other hand], the Israeli public finally understood what it feels like to live with roadblocks."

The Director of the Interdisciplinary Center's Global Research in International Affairs Center, columnist Barry Rubin, wrote in conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: "The Palestinian leadership is paralyzed.... The last peace process took seven years to arrive at its bloody, depressing result. This round seems likely to last less than one year."

Tel Aviv University political scientist Martin Sherman wrote in Maariv: "How can [people such as Silvan Shalom] accept a policy which not only deprives Israel of the means to prevent the possibility of [a Hamas] takeover, but also increase its probability?"

Block Quotes:

1I. "Somebody's Going to Die"

Liberal columnist Yair Lapid wrote on page one of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (May 17): "More than anything else, what stood out most on Monday was the flippancy. The settler youngsters produced, at our expense, a festival of self-adoration that to them seemed to be truly revolutionary. On Monday, they stood in Jerusalem and screamed 'police state.' For a moment, it was impossible not to regret that they were mistaken. In countries where the police are more resolute and less exhausted -- like France or the United States -- they would have been tossed out of the street within three minutes. Settlers Council officials had good reason for the exasperation they felt Monday. Last week, support for disengagement dropped. The road blocking will put the numbers back in the area Ariel Sharon likes to see them. Nobody likes to have thugs running their lives, certainly not Israelis stuck in traffic. On the other hand, maybe there is a valuable lesson to be learned here. The Israeli public finally understood what it feels like to live with roadblocks. Now we also have a sick old lady, our kids won't get to school either, we also left for work but will never get there. For a single moment on Geha road [on the eastern outskirts of Tel Aviv], we too were Palestinians."

II. "Hamas Victorious"

The Director of the Interdisciplinary Center's Global Research in International Affairs Center, columnist Barry Rubin, wrote in conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (May 17): "Let's not mince words: the Hamas landslide victory in the recent Palestinian local elections is a disaster for the Palestinians' hopes for peace, and for Israel. It is a historical turning point. The West will have to choose between recognizing what is happening or veering onto some very dangerous territory.... The essential issue is that if Abu Mazen was too afraid to crack down on terrorists, moderate Palestinian ideology or negotiate a compromise peace with Israel when he had all the power, he will now be even more timid.... No matter how many concessions Israel makes by withdrawing and releasing prisoners, or how much money and support the West gives Abu Mazen, there will be no serious peace process. The Palestinian leadership is paralyzed. Whether Hamas, for its own purposes, lets the cease-fire continue or not, any hope of a real breakthrough is finished.... Aside from its ideology, which has consistently demanded Israel's destruction, why should Hamas abandon a program so demonstrably appealing to Palestinians and

a strategy that is clearly working?.... So the problem remains the same as before: a Palestinian movement shaped by Arafat, extremism, terror and demonization of Israel has not produced a moderate leadership or ideology. Western forces, appeasing and even cheering the extremists, ensure their intransigence. The last peace process took seven years to arrive at its bloody, depressing result. This round seems likely to last less than one year."

III. "Prepare For the Establishment of 'Hamastine'"

Tel Aviv University political scientist Martin Sherman wrote in Maariv (May 17): "The Israeli leadership ought to know this: the moment the IDF leaves territories, it will have neither legal, moral nor practical means to determine what will happen in the abandoned areas and who will rule there. Thus, if some people, like the Foreign Minister, believe that the whole logical basis of disengagement leans on the fact that elements such as Hamas won't take over, how can they accept a policy which not only deprives Israel of the means to prevent the possibility of such a takeover, but also increase its probability?"

12. Democracy in Mideast:

Summary:

Chief Economic Editor and senior columnist Sever Plotker wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "No extremist Muslim regime was established through democratic elections."

Block Quotes:

"Ripe For Democracy"

Chief Economic Editor and senior columnist Sever Plotker wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (May 17): "A ghost is haunting the Arab and Muslim states -- that of democratic elections. The fright can be summed up in one sentence, which non-democratic, anti-democratic and plainly dictatorial leaders keep repeating: if we ask our nations whom they want in power, they will elect sinister extremist Islamists. But this assertion is basically a lie. No extremist Muslim regime was established through democratic elections -- neither that of Khomeini in Iran, nor that of the Taliban in Afghanistan, nor the bloody Sudanese regime.... [On the other hand], there was a number of successful elections, which generated moderate governments. This is the case of Afghanistan, Iraq, Turkey, Indonesia, and Malaysia.... People should not have to take preliminary lessons in democracy or to suffer under authoritarian regimes in order to 'grow up' and become 'ripe enough' to fulfill their basic right to vote."

13. Israeli Ambassador to U.S. Danny Ayalon:

Summary:

Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized: "The foreign minister has to recognize that the prime minister is in charge of relations with the U.S."

Block Quotes:

"The Lesson of Danny Ayalon"

Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (May 17): "The well-publicized quarrel between Danny Ayalon, the Israeli ambassador to the U.S., and Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom is far from over, but its negative effect on Israel's image in the world can already be felt.... International embarrassment is only part of the problem created by the fray. It is hard to see how Israeli Ambassador Danny Ayalon can hold serious talks with officials from the U.S. State Department, the administration or Congress when everyone knows the foreign minister has 'lost the faith' of the ambassador, as the Israeli media reported Shalom's associates saying. Beyond the elements of gossip, which makes this conflict particularly mesmerizing to the Israeli and the global media, is an old quarrel between the Foreign Ministry and the Prime Minister's Office over the question of who owns

diplomatic relations with the U.S.... Now Ayalon finds himself at the center of the conflict between the Prime Minister's Bureau and the Foreign Ministry over control in Washington. As things look now, it seems he will pay with his job. This is a good opportunity to put an end to the ongoing rancor that has Israeli diplomacy wallowing in the mud. The foreign minister has to recognize that the prime minister is in charge of relations with the U.S."

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